



**Town of Hamilton Planning Board  
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## **MINUTES**

**October 15, 2013**

Welcome – At 7:30 PM Chairman Ed Howard opened the October 15, 2013 Planning Board meeting. Board members Claudia Woods, Rob McKean, Jeffrey Melick, Rick Mitchell and Brian Stein were present. Planning Coordinator, Kristine Cheetham, was also present.

### Release of Covenant – Aquilla Farm Road

The Board reviewed pictures submitted from the Attorney relative to the fire hydrant and hammerhead turnaround site improvements for the Aquilla Farm Road subdivision. P. Clark noted that he did not notice the presence of the hydrant on his previous visit to the site.

**ACTION:** P. Clark made a motion to release the covenant on Lot 6 at Aquilla Farm Road. C. Woods seconded. All voted in favor.

### Downtown Planning Workshop: Oct. 3, 2013

K. Cheetham began the discussion of the downtown planning effort by inviting the members of the Planning Board who attended the workshop to share their thoughts with the other members of the Board. P. Clark, E. Howard, B. Stein and R. Mitchell were in attendance at the workshop and shared different perspectives of the downtown planning effort.

P. Clark – He noted that the consultant presented build-out(s) of four different parcels in the downtown. He did not find the style of development (pictures) that were presented reflective of the type of architecture that would fit in with Hamilton. He felt that the presentation might have worked better if there were two or three development options for each site. Finally, he asked: “are we trying to preserve the existing commercial base or replace it with housing?” What role do economics play in the downtown planning effort? K. Cheetham noted that these observations would be relayed to the consultant.

C. Woods and E. Howard wondered how the four sites were selected for potential redevelopment. K. Cheetham explained that the sites were selected to be at different geographic locations in the downtown and were for academic purposes only. There are no current plans to redevelop any of these sites. The designs were intended to invoke a discussion about density.

R. Mitchell noted that the traffic, water, sewer and other infrastructure elements were not a focus of this particular workshop. He also mentioned that the Merchant's group meeting identified marketing and pedestrian issues as their top priorities.

E. Howard asked about the potential for branding in the downtown. He noted that the recent Coaches Parade and Blessing of the Hounds, Image of the Hunt were unique to Hamilton and should be utilized. He also asked about the role of waste water treatment. He wondered if it was to be done on site or whether or not collected and treated in a larger system.

B. Stein and R. Mitchell noted that the HDC intended to begin the planning process for waste water treatment systems.

## **Zoning Discussion**

K. Cheetham provided the Board with copies of the zoning bylaw relative to the Business District and the Willow Street Overlay District. She was seeking the advice of the Board relative to potential amendments to the WSOD language. She noted that each copy had two different highlights for the purpose of discussion.

### A. Location

The blue highlights were intended to generate a discussion about the overall location of the overlay district. The Board discussed applying the language of the WSPD to the entire Business District. Maps were on display as well.

C. Woods noted that she preferred to include the two residential streets with the overlay language if it were applied to the entire district. She felt that it would provide additional opportunities to the homeowners and secure a more consistent approach to zoning for the downtown.

P. Clark was uncertain if he supported applying the overlay language to the entire business district at this time.

Josh Blake, a resident of Hamilton, shared his concerns with the process of amending the zoning language. He wondered if any residential properties would be included or if there were plans to add areas beyond the business district.

K. Cheetham noted that at this time there were no additional areas under consideration. She did mention that at a future time the Planning Board may wish to revisit Residential Zoning classifications and potentially add a Residential/Village zoning category. This is because a majority of the house lots in the downtown area do not meet frontage or acreage requirements

and must go before the ZBA for approvals as non-conforming lots. She noted again that this was raised as a discussion for a future date.

## B. Permitted Uses and Permit Authority

The second portion of the zoning discussion was relative to the permitted uses and the permit granting authority. The zoning handouts were highlighted with orange to signify the differences in permitted uses. K. Cheetham reviewed the permitted uses in the business district and the WSOD with the Board. She noted that there are only three differences: athletic facilities, mixed-residential & commercial and multi-family residential.

The Board was asked to consider whether or not to just add these three uses to the business district language as by-right uses with a site plan review or to apply them within the overlay language and require a special permit. Currently the special permit granting authority (SPGA) is the Planning Board for the overlay district.

The Board also asked if it was possible to add the uses to the business district but to transfer the authority of site plan review from the ZBA to the Planning Board.

K. Cheetham noted that any strategy was possible and that was the intent of the planning project: to determine zoning amendments necessary to promote economic development. She also suggested that timing and politics are always important to consider with zoning amendments.

A majority of the Board favored having design standards included into either the special permit or the site plan review process. Although it is difficult to “word smith” design standards, the Board was hopeful that the consultant would present something that would at least give the permit authority the ability to raise the question in a review process. K. Cheetham noted that if design standards were added to the overlay language they would be listed as 9. Building Standards, section e. Design Standards.

R. Mitchell offered to meet with Bill Bowler of the ZBA to discuss the possibility of transferring the authority of site plan review from ZBA to Planning Board.

The Board asked the Planning Coordinator to forward information to them relative to Site Plan Review; in particular comments from the Master Plan and the Judi Barret memo.

## New/Old Business

Chairman E. Howard brought up several items for discussion under New/Old Business:

1. Inspection of Stone Walls & Nuisance(s) – E. Howard requested information as to whether or not the Building Instructor would review old stone walls in the community. He also wanted to confirm the role of the inspector relative to households that may be

deemed nuisances. A home on Meyer Road was mentioned. K. Cheetham noted that she spoke with the building and public health administrators relative to the Meyer Road property. They both responded that their departments monitor the home for public health and other code violations. The owners are current with taxes and address the home as needed.

2. Dept. of Public Works and Bleeder Pipes – A few members of the Board raised concerns about the status of water pipes within the town. They expressed an understanding that the community has set aside a large budget item for water improvements. However, they were uncertain about the plan for the location of these improvements. R. Mitchell suggested that this item should be raised before the Board of Selectmen and not necessarily the Planning Board.
3. The League of Women Voters is hosting a public information forum on October 23, 2013 from 7-9 PM at the Public Library on the topic of Chapter Land (61, 61 A & 61B).

#### Adjourn

At 9:40 PM R. Mitchell made a motion to adjourn. C. Woods seconded. All voted in favor.

